## **BOOK REVIEWS**



Battle-ax Division: From Africa to Italy with the 78th Division, 1942-45. By Ken Ford. Sutton Publishing, United Kingdom, 1999. 218 Pages, photographs, maps. \$34.95, hardcover. Reviewed by Major Dominic J. Caraccilo.

In 1942, Britain's 78th Division, commonly referred as the Battle-ax Division spearheaded the allied assault in North Africa during the Anglo-American landings of Operation *Torch*. While the division suffered more than 10,000 casualties in the ensuing year of combat, it remained in the fray for 18 more months until VE Day. From the deserts of the North African battles at Tebourda and Lonstop Hill to their final act rounding up *Wehrmacht* in Austria, to their participation as part of an Army of Occupation, the 78th Battle-ax Division remained, as author Ken Ford writes, "a close band of brothers."

Ford, a bookseller specializing in military books and author of four other World War II books, provides a unique account of the exploits of one of the United Kingdom's most celebrated Second World War Divisions. This book conveys some of the most grueling and costly fighting of the war, as indicated by the three Victoria Crosses won by its members.

Ford is quick to point out that the 78th "had the misfortune to serve in the unfashionable theaters of Tunisia and Italy" as part of the neglected First Army, as opposed to Montgomery's more publicized and better supported Eighth Army. Nonetheless, he combines his own compelling narrative with accompanying first-hand accounts that prove that the Division fought valiantly without peer on every front during the war. His book is at once a compelling chronology of a premiere fighting force a well-deserved tribute to the "close band of brothers who stayed together after the end of hostilities today."

For those with even a remote interest in the North African, Italian, and mainland European theaters of war will enjoy this book.

Slim the Standard-bearer: A Biography of Field-Marshal The Viscount Slim, KG,

GCB, GCMG, GCVO, GBE, DSO, MC. By Ronald Lewin. 1976; reprint, Wordsmith Editions, 1999. 350 Pages. Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Harold E. Raugh, Jr., U.S. Army, Retired.

One of the most charismatic and dynamic soldiers of the 20th century British Army was William Joseph Slim, later Field Marshal the Viscount Slim (1891-1970). His adventure-filled military career began upon his commissioning as an officer in 1914. Along the way, Slim commanded at every echelon from platoon to army group, all of them in combat, with the exception of battalion. The culmination of Slim's military career was his appointment in 1948 as Chief of the Imperial General Staff, the first Indian Army officer ever to serve as the professional head of the British Army.

Slim's greatest contributions were made during the Second World War. Early in the conflict he commanded the 10th Indian Infantry Brigade and led it in action against the Italians in Eritrea and the Sudan (1940-1941), then the 10th Indian Division against rebellious Iraqis and Vichy French in Syria (1941). After the January 1942 Japanese invasion of Burma, Slim was appointed commander of Burma Corps, and a few months later, of XV Corps. The following year, Slim assumed command of the Fourteenth Army and began a limited offensive in February 1944 in Arakan. By June 1944, Slim's "Forgotten Army" had decisively won the Imphal/Kohima battle, and thereafter successfully advanced eastward and recaptured Burma. At the end of the war, Slim was commanding Allied Land Forces, South East Asia.

In this superb military biography, historian Ronald Lewin chronicles not only what Slim accomplished, but more importantly, how he led and commanded soldiers. The author highlights Slim's humble background and, armed with his integrity, character, and intellect, Slim reached the pinnacle of his profession. In many respects, Slim's career and life personify selfless service and devotion to duty.

In writing this detailed yet balanced biography, the author evidently had unrestricted access to Slim's personal papers and lifelong correspondence. Lewin also inter-

viewed numerous senior, knowledgeable military leaders, including Mountbatten, Auchinleck, O'Connor, Harding, and Templer. Footnotes, unfortunately, are frequently inadequate or missing, with many quotations totally undocumented. Various episodes and achievements of Slim's life are illustrated by 27 photographs, and six superb maps enhance one's understanding of Slim's most significant military operations.

Lewin's excellent and highly readable Slim the Standardbearer was originally published in 1976. The 1999 publication of this paperback edition is most welcome, as it makes this award-winning biography available to a new and wider audience. This book helps ensure that the life and military career of the competent, courageous, and self-effacing Slim, and the accomplishments of the soldiers he led—especially in Burma—will receive the credit they deserve.

First Infantry Division, World War II: The Big Red One. Second Volume. By Major General (Retired) Albert H. Smith, Jr., Senior Editor. Turner Publishing Company (P.O. Box 3101, Paducah, KY 42002-3101), 2000. Limited Edition. 139 Pages. Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Albert N. Garland, U.S. Army, Retired.

This book is filled with maps, photographs, Medal of Honor and unit citations, "war stories," and individual biographical sketches. It has been designed and produced with one major objective: to present, in General Smith's words, "a good basic historical reference for today's Division soldiers—as well as WWII veterans and their families." And while he says the book "is not a comprehensive historical work produced by professional historians," it can be of value to any historian who works with World War II material.

The book is dedicated to the memory of the late Command Sergeant Major Ted Dobol, who served with the 26th Infantry Regiment from 1940 to 1966, and the other "great NCOs who led the 1st Division into battle."

It leads off with a reprint of *The First*, which is a brief history of the division. Originally published in 1945 in Europe and

then republished, with addenda, in 1996 by the Division's museum here in the United States. *Infantry* magazine published a review of that book in its March-June 1997 issue.

This is followed by a section that honors the 16 division soldiers who were awarded the Medal of Honor during the war; 20 presidential unit citations earned by various division units; a description of the seven foreign decorations earned by the division during World War II; a statistical listing that shows casualties, campaigns (the division spent 443 days in combat during the war), decorations, and senior division officers; the "war stories" and individual biographical sketches; and a final section that is the story of the division's World War II monuments in France, Belgium, and Czechoslovakia.

Finally, on the book's last page, General Smith tells the story of the "Angel of the Big Red One," an angelic figure that is atop the 1st Division's memorial behind the Old Executive Office Building at 17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue NW, in Washington, DC

All Big Red One soldiers, past and present, can be proud of this book and the division's outstanding history of service to our country.

Sword of the Border: Major General Jacob Jennings Brown, 1775-1828. By John D. Morris. Kent State University Press, 2000. 348 Pages. \$35.00. Reviewed by Colonel Cole C. Kingseed, U.S. Army.

Perhaps the least known, yet most successful, American general officer in the War of 1812 was Major General Jacob Jennings Brown. Over the course of the conflict, Brown defeated the British in four of the 18 battles in which more than 400 regulars were involved. Brown's victories at Sackets Harbor, Chippawa, Lundy's Lane, and the sortie at Fort Erie clearly mark him as the most effective American commander of the war. In the first full-length biography of Brown, author John D. Morris has compiled the most comprehensive biography of the officer whom Congress subsequently named the first Commanding General of the Army in June 1821.

Relying extensively on Brown's personal papers and the National and Canadian Archives, Morris views his subject as the war's most successful commander. The author devotes half his story to a chronological approach to Brown's service through the end of the War of 1812, then dedicates the last half of his biography to the period from 1815 until Brown's death in 1828, during

which Brown served as the senior officer of the United States Army. It is in Morris's analysis of the final chapters of Brown's illustrious career that *Sword of the Border* makes its most significant contributions.

Jacob Brown accepted a commission as captain of the New York militia in 1807. Two years later he was promoted to Colonel and rose steadily in rank. When the War of 1812 began, Brown was assigned to the New York-Canadian border, where he served with great distinction. Ably assisted by Winfield Scott, he defeated the British in several battles, culminating in his 1814 campaign on the Niagara frontier. For conspicuous service, Brown earned the commendation of Congress and was one of two major generals—the other being Andrew Jackson—retained in federal service after the war.

While Morris does a commendable job summarizing Brown's service during the war, he falls short in his analysis of Brown's tenure as Commanding General of the Army. Dedicating a single chapter to this critical period in Brown's career, Morris leaves the reader with only a short synopsis of Brown's achievements during the formative years of the professionalization of the officer corps. As the principal military advisor to the President and to the Secretary of War, Brown advised several presidential administrations and implemented executive decisions. He instituted a recruiting service, developed early Artillery and Infantry Schools of Practice, and submitted annual reports to the Secretary of War that addressed pertinent issues such as desertion, brevet rank, and pay incentives.

Brown's tenure as Commanding General, however, was not as pioneering as Morris indicates. An obvious admirer of Brown, Morris credits Brown with defining the office as it would largely remain until the army staff structure underwent reform under Secretary of War Elihu Root in the early twentieth century. Winfield Scott and the Civil War triumvirate of Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, and Philip Sheridan, probably exerted far more influence than Brown on defining the role and mission of Commanding General's Moreover the author opines that many of the War Department reforms under John C. Calhoun deservedly belong to Brown and "the harmonizing affect of Brown's personality." In reality, Brown would have been far more effective had he not been stricken by a series of debilitating ailments during most of his career following the War of 1812.

In summary, Morris has successfully

filled a huge gap in the history of the U.S. Army. Sword of the Border is a major contribution to the historical literature of America's second war with Great Britain and provides an insightful analysis of the career of a much-neglected military commander. Though he did not achieve as much as the author asserts, Jacob Brown does deserve a higher position in the pantheon of American military heroes.

The Soldier's Story: Vietnam in Their Own Words. By Ron Steinman (TV Books, 1999. 367 Pages. \$27.95. Reviewed by Dr. Joe P. Dunn, Converse College.

Several dozen collective Vietnam memoirs now exist. Because each individual's story adds to our knowledge of the multifarious experience, each collection has value. But these books do not differ much one from another, and one wonders how many more of this genre can possibly appear. This particular contribution is the companion volume to The Learning Channel's six-hour documentary series, "Vietnam: The Soldier's Story," produced by ABC News. Averaging more than 2.1 million viewers for each of the three nights of its initial showing, the program tied for the most watched series on The Learning Channel. The book's compiler, a news producer for ABC and NBC News, served as NBC Bureau Chief in Saigon for two years during the late 1960s and covered the Tet Offensive.

More than 150 veterans and subject matter experts were interviewed on and off camera for the documentary series, and 77 of these appear in the book. The interviews are divided into six topical chapters on some of the most dramatic events of the war: the Battle of the Ia Drang Valley, the Siege of Khe Sanh, the Tet Offensive, the Secret War, the Air War, and the Fall of Saigon. The essays are brief but quite interesting. Although all the military services are represented, the collection is less diverse than most books of this type. Non-combat troops (who made up 90 percent of Vietnam veterans), women, and combat soldiers during less high-profile periods of the war are excluded.

A captivating feature of this volume is that each interview includes a picture of the individual at the time, and the concluding section gives a current lengthy one-paragraph biography of that person today, with a current picture. I find these updates particularly engaging and instructive.

Is this volume better than the many others

in this genre? Not Really. It is well worth reading, but it is fairly standard for the field. For those who saw the television series, however, it will have special appeal.

Dear Harry: The Truman Administration Through Correspondence with Everyday Americans. By D.M. Giangreco and Kathryn Moore. Stackpole Books, 1999. 512 Pages. \$34.95. Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Albert N. Garland, U.S. Army, Retired.

On 12 April 1945, following the death of then-President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S Truman, former U.S. Senator and Roosevelt's Vice-President, became the 33d President of the United States. Truman was virtually unknown to most of the U.S. populace, despite his sterling work as chairman of the Senate Select Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program, popularly known as the Truman Committee.

In putting together this book, the authors selected "letters, telegrams, and postcards... almost exclusively from the files of the Harry S Truman Library in Independence, Missouri" to show how the people of the country reacted to the many major events that occurred during President Truman's nearly eight years in office. As such, this is not a scholarly history of that administration; it does offer, rather, a peek into the nation's soul, a peek offered freely by the people themselves. (The authors could have added that they used a number of inter-White House staff memoranda and the results of several special studies.)

The book is divided into 10 chapters, each dealing with one or several subjects. Only three of the chapters are used for a single subject: Chapter 6, the relief of General MacArthur; Chapter 7, the atomic bomb; and Chapter 8, The Korean War; although there is some overlap in all of the chapters, a good amount of the material on Truman's decision to use the bomb against Japan is in Chapter 10. (Giangreco has written on this subject in an earlier effort for a professional military journal.)

The authors have provided enough historical material in each chapter to explain the proper settings at the times decisions were made.

For some reason, perhaps for levity, the authors conclude each chapter, regardless of its contents, with a query concerning whether or not the annual egg roll at the White House, which had been discontinued in 1939 because of the outbreak of World War II, would be held, and an answer to those queries by a White House staff mem-

ber. The answer at the end of each of the first nine chapters was No. At the end of Chapter 10, after the Eisenhower administration had taken over, the answer was Yes.

As one who lived through those times, I thoroughly enjoyed comparing my feelings at the time with those of my fellow citizens. Of course, I was in the military service during the Truman years and may have had a different view of the events as they unfolded. But I was convinced then, as I am now, that few of our presidents took office under more trying conditions or faced more serious problems both at home and abroad than did Harry Truman. His was an administration seemingly buffeted by crisis after crisis, and I believe he handled each at least as well as any of our succeeding presidents could have done. Many of Truman's decisions were criticized; in fact, most of them were, with negatives usually far outnumbering positives. In particular, his decision to integrate the armed forces and the Federal Civil Service in 1948 drew heavy criticism. as did his decision to recognize, in the same year, the new state of Israel.

But the most severe criticism came with his decision to relieve General MacArthur in 1951. Probably no Truman decision received as much criticism as this one, even though much of it had died down within six weeks. Here is one example: "One of the first telegrams to arrive at the White House was dispatched by a Phoenix, Arizona, department store owner and future Senator.... Simple and cloquent, it summed up what many Americans were thinking: 'How Stupid can you get?'" It was signed, Barry Goldwater. (I might say I agreed with the President's move.)

There are a few minor editorial glitches, which the authors have kindly called to my attention. These in no way affect the value of the book. But in one area I disagree with the authors' belief that Truman, in the years immediately following the end of the war in 1945, conducted a "dogged rear-guard action to minimize the impact of defense cuts." Just the opposite was true. Truman used his Secretary of Defense, Louis Johnson ("Louie Defense" to us) as a point man to gut the military services, thereby reducing the defense budget. It was not until the Soviets made their move against Berlin in 1948 that the administration's thinking changed. It was too late; we went to war in Korea with a poorly trained and equipped military force and paid a high price for the neglect.

Still, I recommend this book to you. It gives flavor to the times. It brings back memories of the many problems we faced after World War II, and how many were

solved. But there were others that are still around; for example, Truman believed in some form of national health service. Each president faces and will face his own set of problems and his own crises. Truman's actions, reactions, and decisions present a good guide to follow.

In the Combat Zone—Special Forces Since 1945. By Robin Neillands. New York University Press, 1998. 350 Pages. 350 Pages, photos. \$25.95. Reviewed by Michael F. Dilley.

Robin Neillands is a former Royal Marine Commando and the author of three previous books on British special units. He has also written a variety of other books with military themes on subjects ranging from the Middle Ages to more modern times. So what makes this book so special, covering as it does ground similar to that of several others just coming on the market?

One of the places I look to determine whether I think a book is worthwhile is its sources. If a military history doesn't have a listing of sources, I am less likely to buy it. Neilland's book In the Combat Zone lists books, official documents, interviews, and magazine articles among its sources. In addition, I have read some of his previous books and am familiar with his work. I want to stress "work." This is not just another hohum recounting, in broad terms, of the history of special forces units. In fact, Neilland says in his preface that those former special operators who helped him with his research did so "on the understanding that I told it straight. . . . and did not. . . . produce yet another 'gung ho heroes' epic." He has succeeded and, I suspect, earned the thanks of his sources.

This book attempts to cover, by way of sampling the various kind of special units since the end of World War II, various trouble spots throughout the world and how countries have reacted to those troubles. The accounts lead to the Gulf War of 1990-91. An appendix lists, by country, as many units as Neillands could find of the world's special forces. Although the book focuses on the military units, Neillands also touches on civilian counterparts where appropriate, including police organizations such as Germany's GSG-9, France's GIGN, and the United States' FBI Hostage Rescue Team.

As with other books by Neillands, I found this one interesting, well-written, and easy to read. Although a general military student may get some good points from this book, I suggest that it is intended for and will be better used by those who prefer to focus on

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special units. For those students, I highly recommend it.

The All-Americans at War. The 82nd Division in the Great War, 1917-1918. By James J. Cooke. Praeger, 1999. 168 Pages, photos, maps. \$55.00. Reviewed by Colonel Christopher B. Timmers, U.S. Army.

I remember with fondness my first unit assignment as a new infantry lieutenantthe 1st Battalion, 325th Infantry, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. In World War II, they were glider infantry. I was disappointed to learn that even though the 325th was now airborne infantry, the unit had no combat record of parachute assaults in that war. A silly thing, I know, but friends and classmates who were assigned to the 504th or 508th (both parachute infantry regiments in World War II) would sneer when they learned my regimental designation: "Oh, yeah," they would condescend, "the glider riders." (The message was clear: Real men arrived on the battlefield in parachute harnesses.) As time went on, I developed a pride in my battalion and its parent regiment. The 325th had its share of unit citations and individual decorations, and the soldiers assigned to it (now all jumpers) could go toe-to-toe with those from any other outfit. I knew vaguely that the 325th was part of the old 82d Division and had fought in the first World War, but its existence for me seemed to date from 1942, when an "Airborne" tag was affixed over the All-American patch. The First World War, for the most part, didn't exist.

Well, it did exist. Men fought, died, and made innumerable sacrifices. And a substantial amount of the sacrifice from the American side came from the 82d Division. Thanks to James Cooke, junior officers, amateur historians, and serious scholars no longer have any excuses for ignorance. The story is told briskly and in detail. Cooke has managed to go beyond regimental histories and secure old letters, memoranda, out-ofprint texts, and diary entries to tell a fascinating history. Next to the Korean War. World War I is probably the least understood and most neglected major conflict in U.S. history. In telling the story of the 82d, Cooke tells much of the story of our entire involvement in this war.

As a former All-American, I knew that York Theater at Bragg was named for Sergeant Alvin York, noted Tennessee marksman and recipient of the Medal of Honor, but it was inspiring to learn that Pike Field (another Bragg landmark) was posthumously named for Lieutenant Colonel Emory Pike, the division's first Medal of Honor recipient. And that Jonathan Wainwright, hero of the Bataan Death March, served in France as the division's G-3.

The 82d of World War II fame is well known, and its service in the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and more recently the Persian Gulf are all in recent memory. But World War I and the All Americans are rarely mentioned in the same sentence. Thanks to James Cooke, that omission is in the process of being corrected.

## RECENT AND RECOMMENDED

The Military Balance 1999-2000. Published by Oxford University Press for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2000. \$132.00.

Horse Sweat and Powder Smoke: The First Texas Cavalry in the Civil War. By Stanley S. McGowen. Texas A&M University, 1999. 248 Pages. \$29.95, Hardcover.

The Oxford Companion to American Military History. Edited by John Whiteelay Chambers II. Oxford University Press, 2000. 950 Pages. \$60.00, Hardcover.

On Being a Superpower and Not Knowing What To Do About It: Scenarios and Security in the New Century. By Seymour J. Deitchman. Westview Press, 2000. 362 Pages. \$32.00, Hardcover.

Tactics and the Experience of Battle in the Age of Napoleon. By Rory Muir. Hardcover edition published in 1998. Yale University Press, 2000. 342 Pages. \$16.95.

Soldier's Study Guide. Fourth edition. By CSM Walter J. Jackson, U.S. Army Retired. Stackpole, 2000. 160 Pages, \$12.95.

The Great War and Modern Memory. By Paul Fusssell. Originally published in 1975. Oxford University Press, 2000. 378 Pages. \$14.95, Softbound.

America's Struggle with Chemical-Biological Warfare. By Albert J. Mauroni. Praeger, 2000. 320 Pages. \$65.00.

Patton's Ghost Corps: Cracking the Siegfried Line. By Nathan N. Prefer. (Originally published 1998. Presidio, 2000. 228 Pages, maps, photographs. \$19.95, Softbound.

Hap Arnold and the Evolution of American Airpower. By Dik Alan Daso. Smithsonian, 2000. 333 Pages. \$29.95.

Women in Vietnam: The Oral History. By Ron Steinman. TV Books, 2000. 320 Pages, B&W photos. \$26.00.

A Military History of Canada: From Champlain to Kosovo. Fourth edition. By Desmond Morton. McClelland & Stewart, 2000. 317 Pages, photographs. \$18.95, Softbound.

Guide to Military Operations Other Than War: Tactics, Techniques, & Procedures for Stability & Support Operations Domestic & International. By Licutenant Colonel Keith E. Bonn, U.S. Army, Retired. Stackpole, 2000. 368 Pages. \$19.95, Softbound.

The Battle for Pusan: A Korean War Memoir. By Addison Terry. Presidio, 2000. 256 Pages. Maps, photographs. \$27.95.

Cigars, Whiskey and Winning: Leadership Lessons from General Ulysses S. Grant. By Al Kaltman. Prentice Hall, 2000. 335 Pages. \$13.00, Softbound. American Generalship: Character is Everything: The Art of Command. By Edgar F. Puryear. Presidio, 2000. 350 Pages. \$34.95.

A Time of War: Remembering Guadalcanal, A Battle Without Maps. By William H. Whyte. Fordham University Press, 2000. 148 Pages. \$17.50, Softbound.

We Band of Angels: The Untold Story of American Nurses Trapped on Bataan by the Japanese. Hardcover edition 1999. Pocket Books, 2000. 327 Pages, photos and maps. \$13.95, Softbound.

Breakout: The Chosin Reservoir Campaign, Korea 1950. By Martin Russ. First Published 1999. Penguin Books, 2000. 452 Pages. \$14.95, Softbound.

Kriegie: An American POW in Germany. By Oscar G. Richard III. Louisiana State University Press, 2000. 140 Pages. \$24.95.

The Irish War: The Hidden Conflict Between the IRA and British Intelligence. By Tony Geraghty. Johns Hopkins, 2000. 472 Pages. \$29.95, Hardcover.

The Road to War. Revised Edition. By Richard Overy with Andrew Wheatcroft. Originally published 1989. Penguin, 2000. 463 Pages. \$14.95, Softbound.

The Delafield Commission and the American Military Profession. By Matthew Moten. Texas A&M University Press, 2000. 288 Pages. \$47.95.

Battle for Korea: A History of the Korean Conflict. By Robert J. Dvorchak. Originally published 1993. Combined Publishing, 2000. 320 Pages. \$24.95, Softbound.

Educating the U.S. Army: Arthur L. Wagner and Reform, 1875-1905. By T.R. Brereton. University of Nebraska Press, 2000. 177 pages. \$45.00.

The Fighting Pattons. By Brian M. Sobel. Originally published 1997. Dell Books, 2000. 416 Pages. \$6.50, Softbound.

The Quotable Soldier. Edited by Lamar Underwood. Lyons Press, 2000. 288 Pages. \$20.00.

In Great Waters: The Epic Story of the Battle of the Atlantic 1939-45. By Spencer Dunmore. McClelland and Stewart, 2000. 352 Pages. \$24.95.

The Fall of France: May-June 1940. By Martin Marix Evans. Stackpole, 2000. 150 Pages (b&w and color plates). \$29.95.

Terrible Swift Sword: Union Artillery, Cavalry and Infantry, 1861-1865. By John P. Langellier. American Soldier, His Uniform and His Equipment Series. Stackpole, 2000. 72 Pages.

General of the Army George C. Marshall, Soldier and Statesman. By Ed Cray. Originally published 1990. Cooper Square Press, 2000. 847 Pages, \$29.95, Softbound.

Colonel Despard: The Life and Times of an Anglo-Irish Rebel. By Clifford D. Comer. Combined Publishing, 2000. 333 Pages. \$29.95.

Brandenburg Division: Commandos of the Reich. By Eric Lefevre. Histoire & Collections, 2000. 333 Pages. \$24.95.

The Thin Yellow Line. By William Moore. Wordsworth Editions, 1999. 292 Pages. \$12.99, Softbound.

The Battle of Neuve Chapelle: French Flanders. By Geoff Bridger. Leo Cooper, 2000. 144 Pages. \$16.95.

Shurik. By Kyra Petrovskaya Wayne. Lyons Press, 2000. 224 Pages. \$14.95, Softbound.